

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILY SUPPORT
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting held Thursday 26th April 2012

PRESENT: Councillors Gill Furniss (Chair), Isobel Bowler, Keith Hill, Talib Hussain, Colin Ross, Andrew Sangar, Ian Saunders, Nikki Sharpe and Clive Skelton.

Education Non-Council Members:

Jules Jones and Alison Warner

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

<u>Apology</u>	<u>Substitute</u>
Joan Stratford	No substitute appointed
Councillor Colin Taylor	Councillor Clive Skelton
Councillor Karen McGowan	No substitute appointed
Councillor Stuart Wattam	No substitute appointed
Councillor Mohammed Maroof	No substitute appointed
Gillian Foster	No substitute appointed

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 There were no items where the public and press were excluded.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Councillor Colin Ross declared an interest in item 6 on the agenda as a member of the City Wide Learning Body, as it was likely that a resolution would be passed to the CWLB for its consideration following the meeting of the Committee.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

4.1 There were no public questions or petitions submitted to the meeting.

5. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

5.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny Committee held on 23rd February 2012 were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom, it was requested that the Policy Officer (Scrutiny) request again the statistics previously requested at the meeting of the Committee held 19th December 2011, in section 7.12 of the report regarding the Youth Service, as these had not yet been received (the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families to issue figures of youth club attendance broken down by Community Assembly area for the Scrutiny Policy Officer to

circulate to Members).

6. **SCHOOL GOVERNANCE UPDATE**

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Scrutiny Policy Officer, regarding Educational Outcomes for Children and Young People through Effective Governance. In attendance for this item were Eric Pye, Principal Officer, Governance, David Molloy, Scrutiny Policy Officer, and Iain Peel, Assistant Director, Inclusion and Learning.
- 6.2 David Molloy reported that the paper reflected on a series of meetings which had been held to scrutinise the effectiveness of Governance in Sheffield and the factors which impacted upon this. He added that the report highlighted the key points of discussion and how the recommendations of the Scrutiny Committee had contributed to the 'Journey to Outstanding' Strategy to securing outstanding educational outcomes for children and young people through effective Governance.
- 6.3 Mr. Molloy provided some background information, commenting that, in September 2011, the Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny Committee expressed a desire to do some in-depth work into the quality and effectiveness of school Governance in the City, and look for potential ways in which it could be improved further. The issue had been prompted initially by concerns about poor attainment levels in Sheffield, and the Scrutiny Committee was keen to examine the quality and effectiveness of school Governance in holding the performance of Sheffield schools to account by providing rigorous challenge to school leadership.
- 6.4 The Scrutiny Committee took the view that, in the context of schools becoming increasingly autonomous and moving away from local authority control, it was essential that Governing Bodies were equipped with the capacity, skills and confidence to do this effectively in the future local education climate. In addition, it was noted that researched evidence indicated that effective school Governance was a critical factor contributing to strong school improvement and educational attainment.
- 6.5 Mr. Molloy reported that the main findings so far with regard to effective governance had been as follows-
- The importance of having the right people with the right skills: recruiting a range of talents to Governing Bodies;
 - The need to provide focused and targeted support to school Bodies, and crucially, extra challenge;
 - The need to work more with employers to allow employees time off in which to become a school Governor;
 - The need for Governing Bodies to be 'proactive' so that they acknowledged their specific training requirements for further development;
 - Supporting Governing Bodies for their schools' potential conversion to

other school models, and

- The need to develop a local support network to encourage Governing Bodies to further collaborate with one another.

6.6 Eric Pye went on to further detail schemes which had been put in place to encourage City Council employees to become Governors, which had had a successful start so far. He also emphasised the importance of training and development for all Governors around conversion to other school models, so they were fully aware of all the implications. There also needed to be emphasis placed upon increasing Governors' understanding of school performance data, so that they were able to act as a 'critical friend' to teaching staff and management, and ask appropriate questions.

6.7 Mr. Pye went on to describe the importance of Governors working proactively, to attempt to identify issues before they developed. He commented that extra Governors could be placed in struggling schools in pairs to try and resolve any challenging situations. He also emphasised the importance of attendance for Governors at meetings, with a 90% attendance record as the desired level.

6.8 Members asked questions and made suggestions to the report as follows;

- More work needed to take place to develop time-off arrangements for people in employment wishing to carry out Governing duties, and the benefits of having a Governor on the workforce needed to be 'marketed' better to employers.
- Members were keen that all Governors were fully trained on understanding school performance data.
- Although it was noted that Governing Bodies were able to streamline themselves in terms of membership, Members were keen that they did not reduce their numbers too much, as it was essential to retain a strong and effective membership.
- It was commented that the word 'challenge' in the report was unhelpful, and that 'support' may be a better term to use.
- It was suggested that Governors should be paid, to ensure that effective people were carrying out the role.
- Members were keen that all Governors were aware of the importance of RAISEonline (Reporting and Analysis for Improvement through school Self-Evaluation online) and emphasised the importance of critical awareness of performance data.
- Members were keen that if the Local Authority did make the decision to send two additional Governors into a struggling school, that this was done with preparation and tact, so that the existing Governing Body worked together and did not see the two additional Governors as a threat.

6.9 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee;

(a) notes the contents of the report now submitted and thanks everyone

involved in the work undertaken around Governance;

(b) refers the report now submitted to (i) the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, and (ii) the next meeting of the City Wide Learning Body for their consideration;

(c) requests that the Committee examines ways of encouraging unsuccessful candidates for Parent Governorships to consider standing elsewhere, and

(d) requests that an annual review be held to examine the effectiveness of school Governance and the impact of improvement strategies.

7. **POLICY UPDATE**

7.1 The Policy Officer (Scrutiny) outlined some key developments in Education Policy for Members' information, including information on change to adoption performance indicators, and it was noted that this issue had already been referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for its consideration. Concerns were also raised by Members over the number of child minders in the City, and what their qualifications were, and it was agreed that James White would provide relevant performance information and circulate it to Members. There was also a request for some local context to be provided to Members on key areas of policy mentioned in the report.

7.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee notes the contents of the report now submitted.

8. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

8.1 To be confirmed.